



## ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

### Guidance for Aquatic Venues

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there is no evidence that SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, can be spread to people through water in pools, hot tubs, spas, or water play areas.

**Per the CDC guidance, under all circumstances, the following precautions should be taken by people utilizing public pools, hot tubs, and water playgrounds:**

- [Stay home if you are sick.](#)
- Protect yourself while visiting aquatic venues:
  - Avoid close contact and stay at least 6 feet away from others.
  - Wash your hands often, especially after leaving the pool, with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
  - Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) and immediately throw the tissue in the trash.
  - Consider the use of a cloth face coverings, when feasible, at the venue **but not in the water.**
    - Coverings should not be placed on children less than 2 years of age, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cover without assistance.
    - Cloth face coverings should never be worn in the water.
  - If you are at [higher risk](#) for severe illness, you should avoid visiting aquatic venues. People at higher risk for [severe illness](#) include adults 65 or older and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions.

To the extent possible, public aquatic venue operators should take measures to ensure that employees and guests follow these guidelines.

**The Arizona Department of Health Services recommends the following additional steps be taken by aquatic venues:**

- Implement physical distancing precautions that maintain at least 6 feet between guests who do not live in the same household, when possible:
  - Modify deck layouts to ensure individuals can remain at least 6 feet apart from those whom they don't share a household with and provide physical barriers and cues to ensure staff, guests, and swimmers follow physical distancing rules both in and out of the water (e.g., lane lines in the water, chair and table spacing on the deck, and tape on the decks, floors, or sidewalks).
  - Stagger the use of communal spaces and restrict common areas where people are likely to congregate and interact.
  - Operate with reduced occupancy and capacity based on the size of the pool lounge area.



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- Enforce similar physical distancing requirements in employee-only spaces, such as dining rooms, uniform control areas, and shared office spaces.
- Avoid group events, gatherings, or meetings both in and out of the water, if physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- Exceptions to physical distancing guidelines include:
  - Rescuing a distressed swimmer, providing first aid, or performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation, with or without an automated external defibrillator.
  - Individuals in the process of evacuating an aquatic facility due to an emergency.
- Be aware of local or state policies or recommendations on mass gatherings to determine if events such as fitness classes, swim lessons, swim team practice, swim meets, or pool parties can be held. If these must be held:
  - Limit the number of participants in the class or event.
  - Implement symptom screening of staff and participants.
  - Stagger drop-off or pick-up times.
  - Limit traveling for events (e.g., swim meets) to prevent mixing of individuals from different geographical locations.
- Provide adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors, including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, disinfecting wipes, tissues, and no-touch trash cans.
- Distribute and post health messages and materials to staff and guests and educate about everyday preventive actions that include respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene:
  - Staying home when sick.
  - Covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or elbow (not your hands) and immediately throwing the tissue in the trash.
  - Washing hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Post signage at entrances about how to stop the spread of COVID-19, properly wash hands and practice other protective measures, properly use cloth face coverings, as well as advising those with symptoms of illness to not enter.
- Use a system that separates the already cleaned and disinfected items from the items that need to be cleaned and disinfected.
- Use disposable gloves while laundering towels and clothing and, in accordance with manufacturer's instructions, use the warmest allowable water temperature and ensure items are completely dried.
  - Do not shake used towels.
  - Clean and disinfect bins that hold used towels.
  - Wash hands right away after removing gloves used while handling used towels.
  - Consider requiring guests to provide their own towels.
- Ensure that ventilation systems of indoor spaces operate properly.
  - Increase the circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors, using fans, or other methods.



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- Maintain water systems of these facilities (including disinfection with chlorine and bromine) to inactivate viruses in the water.
- Ensure that all water systems like drinking fountains, decorative fountains, and hot tubs are safe to use [after a prolonged facility shut down](#) to minimize the risk of [Legionnaires' disease](#) and other waterborne diseases.
- Discourage the use of shared items such as goggles, nose clips, snorkels, toys, and equipment.
  - Consider not providing pool floats or toys. If they must be provided, have adequate quantities of equipment (such as kick boards and pool noodles) to minimize sharing between guests.
  - Consider limiting the use of equipment and disinfect immediately after each use.
- Ensure that on-duty lifeguards are not expected to monitor handwashing, the use of cloth face coverings, or social distancing. Assign this responsibility to another staff member.

### **The Arizona Department of Health Services recommends the following additional steps be taken by staff:**

- Document and communicate flexible sick leave policies that permit adherence with public health isolation and quarantine guidance.
- Implement symptom screening for employees prior to the start of their shift.
- Train all staff on appropriate cleaning and disinfection, hand hygiene, and respiratory etiquette.
- Have employees or volunteers maintain at least 6 feet separation from other individuals and ensure the use of cloth face coverings when possible.
- Provide appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for employees in accordance with public health recommendations.
- Provide adequate supplies in employee workspaces to support healthy hygiene behaviors, including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, disinfecting wipes, tissues, and no-touch trash cans.
- Intensify cleaning, disinfection, and ventilation.
  - Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and all areas after they are touched or used, such as handrails, slides, structures for climbing or playing, lounge chairs, tabletops, pool noodles, kickboards, door handles, surfaces of restrooms, handwashing stations, diaper-changing stations, showers, etc.
  - Comprehensive sanitation should include sanitizing pool chairs, tables, and other poolside furniture after every use.
  - See additional [CDC reopening guidance](#) on cleaning and disinfecting.

The list of EPA-approved disinfectant products for emerging viral pathogens expected to be effective against COVID-19 can be accessed [here](#).

**For additional guidance, visit CDC's [Considerations for Public Pools, Hot Tubs, and Water Playgrounds During COVID-19](#).**

**For COVID-19 questions, please call the Arizona COVID-19 Hotline at: 1-844-542-8201**